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[FORM 24.]



DIPHTHERIA.

ITS PREVENTION AND RESTRICTION.

ISSUED BY THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH.

of Maine.

Diphtheria is a contagious and infectious disease attacking persons of all ages, but affecting children much more frequently than it does adults. It may be communicated from the sick to the well by means of spoons, cups, or other articles which pass from mouth to mouth, or through the medium of the air, or it may be spread by means of infected clothing.

So generally is diphtheria regarded as due to unsanitary conditions, that by common consent it is classed among the "filth diseases;" and when we find it arising, apparently independently of sources of infection, spontaneously as it would seem, we may be pretty sure that something is wrong in the health conditions of the home where it is found.

The unsanitary conditions which seem to give rise to diphtheria may be in the direction of the food or water supply: the well may be too near the privy or cess-pool, or sink drain, or barnyard, and be polluted by soakage through the filthy soil; or the something wrong may be in the direction of the air supply: the sleeping rooms and living rooms are perhaps not ventilated and the air is rebreathed and repoisened, or a wet and foul cellar is under the house, or sewer gas goes into the rooms from defective water-closets or other fixtures, or from sink drains, or privies, or cess-pools.

When once diphtheria has arisen, the law of simple contagion carries it to the rich and the poor, to the cleanly and the uncleanly, but not to all alike. Filth invites disease and gives its germs the most congenial soil in which to develop into pestilence; but cleanliness offers only barren ground for their development.

Diphtheria is a preventable disease. Proper preventive measures are almost invariably followed by the limitation of the disease to the first case or cases. When diphtheria gets away from the primary cases and makes its escape upon the community, somebody is to blame. The sooner we accept this as a sanitary maxim, the sooner we shall begin to do our duty as individuals and as communities.

PREVENTION.

Keep away from the sources of the contagion. Do not go where the disease is, if you can help it; and, above all, do not let your children go where it is. Permit no one to come to your home who has been where it is.

From the dwelling and its vicinity banish all sources of filth, whether of the ground, of the water or of the air. The ground under and around the house, if not naturally dry, should be thoroughly and deeply drained.

Diphtheria does not come from far through the air, therefore do not shut up your house tightly, thinking thereby to shut out the disease. By so doing you shut *in* the poison of rebreathed air, which paves the way and makes it easy for the poison of diphtheria to claim your children. Let the sunshine in by day and the pure air both by day and night. When diphtheria is prevalent, avoid all crowded gatherings; especially keep children from such places.

What is apparently only a common sore throat in adults will sometimes give rise to an outbreak of diphtheria in children; therefore, in all cases of sore throat, prudence would dictate caution in using dishes which others are to use. A kiss to a child under these circumstances may be the unconscious signature of the little one's death warrant.

When diphtheria is rife, keep from the children gum, jewsharps, harmonicas and other things which go from mouth to mouth.

Be sure that the drinking water and the milk are pure.

RESTRICTION.

As soon as it is found that a person has diphtheria he should immediately be separated from the rest of the family and put into a sunny and well-ventilated room, preferably on the upper floor, and as disconnected as possible from other rooms, especially the living and sleeping rooms of children.

Before moving the patient into the room, all needless articles, such as carpets, contents of wardrobes, etc., which would catch the infection, should be removed.

No other person besides the nurse or necessary attendants and the physician should be permitted in the room, and they should take special precautions not to carry the infection. Their communication with the rest of the family should be as restricted as possible.

The local board of health, or health officer, should immediately be notified and should coöperate with the physician to keep the disease from spreading. Children and parents from other houses should be warned; and, if they needlessly and obstinately persist in coming, they should be driven away.

Neither the nurse nor any other person should eat or drink anything in the sick room or anything which has been there. Food which the patient has left should be burned.

Cats and dogs should be kept from the sick chamber, or better, out of the house, for their fur can easily carry the infection. These animals, as well as some others, sometimes have diphtheria, and communicate it to children.

The dishes which the patient uses should not be used by others, or washed with other dishes. They should be washed by themselves in boiling-hot water.

The utmost care must be taken that the discharges from the mouth, throat and nose do not soil the room or its furnishings. These discharges should be received on pieces of cloth and then burned. If this cannot be done they should be thoroughly disinfected with Disinfectant No. 5, No. 6, or No. 2.

The discharges from the kidneys and bowels should be liberally treated with Disinfectant No. 5, No. 6, or No. 2, and not poured into the privy-vault, but buried, if possible, 200 feet or more from dwelling houses and water supply.

The bed and body clothing should not be mixed with the family wash, but should be put into boiling-hot Disinfectant solution No. 4, or No. 5.

No person from a house where there is diphtheria should go into public assemblies, such as schools, churches, or concerts.

Persons who have had diphtheria should not mingle with the public for some time after the last trace of the disease has left the throat and nose, and then not until they and all their clothing have been thoroughly washed and disinfected.

In case of death the body should be enclosed in a sheet thoroughly wet in Disinfectant No. 4 or No. 5, and put into a tight coffin, which should not afterward be opened. The funeral should be strictly private, and in no case should children be permitted to be present.

After recovery or death, disinfect the room with Disinfectant No. 1.

DISINFECTANTS.

No. 1. Sulphur Fumigation.

To use this effectively, two pounds of sulphur should be burned in a room ten feet square. Every opening into the room, flues, doors, windows, cracks and crevices, must be closed, except the door by which the disinfector is to escape. The sulphur is to be burned in an iron kettle or other vessel set in a tub containing a little water to guard against fire. A little alcohol or kerosene must be poured upon the sulphur, by means of which it may be ignited. Leave the room quickly, for the fumes are highly poisonous when breathed, and close the door tightly. Let the room remain closed twenty-four hours or more. Then air thoroughly for several days.

No. 2. For the Discharges.

Sulphate of Iron (copperas), 3 pounds; warm water, 1 gallon; mix. This leaves rust-spots on clothing.

No. 3. For Privies, Cess-Pools, etc.

Sulphate of Iron, $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds; water, 1 gallon; mix.

No. 4. For Clothing.

Sulphate of Zinc (white vitriol), 4 ounces; common salt, 2 ounces; water, 1 gallon; mix.

No. 5. Corrosive Sublimate Solution.

Corrosive Sublimate, 60 grains; permanganate of potassa, 1 grain; water, 1 gallon; mix.

Corrosive Sublimate is one of the surest destroyers of disease germs known, but its dangerously poisonous qualities make it unsafe for general use. It could be used instead of No. 2, or one half this strength instead of Nos. 3 and 4.

No. 6. Chloride of Lime Solution.

Chloride of Lime of the best quality, 4 ounces; soft water, 1 gallon; mix. This is one of the best and cheapest disinfectants.

No. 7.

Boiling for half an hour is the surest way to destroy infection. Immersion in No. 4. or No. 6, will lessen the danger from infected clothing until it can be boiled, which should be done as soon as possible.

Some of these directions may seem extreme, but they are necessary, every one of them. It is some trouble to carry them out carefully, but that is nothing compared with the possible results to you, if you neglect them; and, in thinking of the rights of others, remember the Golden Rule.

Please Preserve for Future Reference.